1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

However, each tree in the bush is believed to have a spirit of its own (wiwi akuru: tree spirit) which must be placated when the tree is cut. When cutting a field, care is taken to pour a mouthful of cassiri on each stump. In return for this mark of respect the spirit formerly inhabiting the tree may remain in the vicinity, exercising a benevolent supervision of its old location until it finds a young sapling in which to take up its residence, or it may leave immediately for a new residence. If an offering is not made, the spirit of the felled tree will lurk about in an angry mood and bring trouble to the crops. Adolphus Tony, the headman at Parapimai settlement, says that he often hears the spirit of a large felled tree talking. It sounds like a man speaking at a distance.

A man must not sell a korial (dug-out canoe) immediately after he has finished building it because the spirit of the tree from which it is made will become vexed and cause the craft to warp or crack. However, if a proper offering is made when the tree, from which a korial is to be built, is felled, the spirit of the tree will come to the builder in his dreams and show him how to make the korial successfully. When a man finally does sell one, he places the goods which he received for it on the stump of the tree for a night. In one case, at least, the payment was even placed on the stump of a korial tree when I rented a korial from an owner for a month. No ceremonial, however, attends the actual construction of a korial.

When a bow is made, an offering must be left on the stump of the tree from which it was cut. If, however, the weapon is made from a fallen tree which has no visible stump, no offering is necessary because it is believed that the spirit is already gone.

The silk cotton tree (*Bombax* sp.) is distinguished from other trees by the fact that it harbors a number of spirits, including a special being which lives only in silk cotton trees (kumaka akuru). Other trees, with one exception, have only one spirit attached to each. When questioned, the Caribs reply simply that the silk cotton tree has a number of spirits because it is the biggest tree in the bush. Caribs refuse to cut down the silk cotton tree. The generally stated opinion is that this deference to the tree is due to the hardness of its wood, which breaks axes used to chop it. David of Sawari said that the axes were broken because of the strength of the spirits in the trees. MacDonald of Powis Hill sug-

1: Gillin E-5 (1932-33) 1936 SR9 Carib SR9

one spirit for each creek and one head spirit for each river. The number of lesser spirits inhabiting each stream depends upon its size. It might be thought that the head spirit of the Barama River would receive special veneration, but I could find no evidence that this was the case. It is considered good, when reaching a part of the river on which one has not travelled before, to dip up some of the river water in the hand and allow a few drops to fall in the eyes. In this way one establishes communion with the river spirits of the new region. There seems to be little ritual connected with the river spirits which can be practised by laymen. Drowning and accidents on the river, as well as shortage of fish, are attributed to the displeasure of the river spirits, who may be propitiated by the piaiyen.

Each human settlement has its own spirit which exercises supervision of the people and houses. The house spirit is said to live in the houses like the human inhabitants. When people are away, a stranger chancing upon the settlement can sometimes hear the spirits talking among themselves. These house and settlement spirits seem to do little either of harm or good if they are well treated. However, when the construction of a house is completed, the owner holds a spree and scatters some of the drink on the floor as an offering to the house spirit before offering any to the guests. This function does not have to be performed by the piaiyen.

Lines and trails have no special spirits, although they are under the jurisdiction of the bush spirits who happen to be operating in their vicinity.

We have yet to describe the epos,[1] grotesque beings which figure in the folk tales and which are to be met by travellers in the bush. They are said to be recognizable by the long dank hair which covers their whole bodies. Under the hair, the body of an epo is extremely thin, so thin that the waist may be surrounded by a man's hand. They have heavy superorbital ridges, a peculiarity which prevents them from seeing anything above them. When climbing a tree, for instance, an epo is forced to climb up head downward so that he can see where he is going. They are also distinguished in their lack of either buttocks or anus, and occasionally, it is said, the anal region is occupied by a bed of red hot

[1] Apparently the same beings which in certain other tribes are designated as hebus. See Roth, 1915, *Animism and Folk Lore*, p. 173.